TV Families of the Fifties

We all wanted our families to be just like these. Perfect. Nobody ever raised their voice and all problems were resolved equitably - in less than half an hour!

Women gladly cooked and cleaned, dressed in pearls and high heels, no less, while awaiting the arrival home of the all knowing husband.

While it all seems rather silly and innocent now, I am part of a generation who thought these women were what we were supposed to grow up to be.

The Nelsons
822 Sycamore Road
Hillsdale

Show Available on VHS

Buy the A&E Biography
Ozzie & Harriet: Adventures of America's Favorite Family

Ozzie and Harriett 1952-1966
Ozzie Nelson
Harriett (Hilliard) Nelson
David Nelson
Rick Nelson

Ozzie created it; wrote it; directed it. Although he did have some writing help from brother Don Nelson, Bill Davenport and Ben Gershman. The house on Sycamore Road was an exact replica of their own home.

Ricky Nelson sang his version of Fats Domino's I'm Walkin' on the show - launching his career as a singer and Teen idol.
Entitled "Rick the Drummer" it aired on April 10, 1957.

After thirteen seasons in black and white, Ozzie and Harriett aired on color for the 1965-1966 season. It was to be their last year. But they had a long 435 season run of it.

No, they never said what Ozzie did for a living. And from what we saw, he hung out at home or in the garden too much to have a day job!


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The Andersons
607 South Maple Street
Springfield

Father Knows Best
1954-1958

Robert Young as Jim Anderson
(Manager of General Insurance Co.)
Jane Wyatt as Margaret Anderson
Elinor Donahue as Betty "Princess" Anderson
Billy Gray as James "Bud" Anderson Jr.
Lauren Chapin as Kathy "Kitten" Anderson

Natividad Vacio as Frank (Fronk) the Gardener

Robert Young died in 1998.

GOOD NEWS! Lauren Chapin has her own website full of pics and info about her charities and appearances. Keep up with the vivacious "Kitten" on her site.
The Cleavers
Mayfield

(Wav)(70K) Ward to Wally..."I was your age once."

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Leave It To Beaver
1957-1963

Hugh Beaumont as Ward Cleaver (Accountant)
Barbara Billingsley as June Cleaver
Jerry Mathers as Theodore "Beaver" Cleaver
Tony Dow as Wallace "Wally" Cleaver
Ken Osmond as Eddie Haskell
Frank Bank as Clarence "Lumpy" Rutherford
Richard Deacon as Fred Rutherford

Tony Dow has had a busy career as a director, includng the 2000 hit "Cover Me: Based on the True Life of an FBI Family". Ken Osmond quit showbiz to become a police officer.


The Stones

The Donna Reed Show
1958-1966
Donna Reed as Donna Stone
Carl Betz as Dr. Alex Stone
(He was a Pediatrician)
Shelley Fabares as Mary Stone
Paul Petersen as Jeff Stone
Patti Petersen as Trish Stone

Patti, Paul's real life sister, came onboard in 1963 as an orphan adopted by the Stones.

* In 1962 Columbia Pictures, under their Colpix label, set Stu Phillips about the task of producing hit singles for the teenage stars of the show. The result was Shelley Fabares' '62 hit Johnny Angel, and Petersen's '63 hit, My Dad.

Among the celebs who made their first major TV appearances on the show:
John Astin ("Mouse at Play" 5/10/61)
James Darren ("April Fool" 1/4/59)
George Hamilton ("Have Fun" 4/2/59)

The show was produced by Reed's husband, Tony Owen.

Donna Reed died in 1986 of a pancreatic cancer, and Betz in 1978 of lung cancer.

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